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TAGS: NATO PREL AF
SUBJECT: NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL READOUT JUNE 18 2008

Classified By: CDA Richard G. Olson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (S) SUMMARY:

-- The NAC exchange of views with Georgian FM Tkeshelashvili reported septel, USNATO 00213.

-- Farewell to Ambassador Nuland: Secretary General Hoop de Scheffer (SYG) gave an emotional and affectionate tribute to Ambassador Nuland, in this, her last NAC after two tours at NATO. Nuland responded with gratitude and provided the NAC with a snapshot of her vision of transatlantic security in the 21st century.

-- Afghanistan: France and Turkey expressed reservations about the SYG's proposal to issue a tasking for NATO military advice on amending the ISAF OPLAN to permit direct action to interdict narcotics trafficking and production facilities. The draft tasker will be issued under a silence procedure. The SYG gave a readout of his June 12 bilat with Pakistani FM Qureshi, the IMS briefed on the Sarpoza prison break in Kandahar and the Chairman of the Military Committee (CMC) stated that Kandahar City is not threatened. The UK and Slovakia announced minor force increases over the course of 2008-2009, while Italy announced a transformation8 of its ISAF caveats.

-- Balkans: The CMC gave an update on the current situation on the ground now that the Kosovo Constitution is in effect. The Spanish PermRep indicated that Belgrade is ready to resume technical consultations with KFOR on its activities in Mitrovica

-- Africa: Nothing discussed.

-- Iraq: The SYG reported that the PCG has completed the out-of-cycle review of NTM-I.

-- Response To Terrorism: CMC briefed Allies on Bi-Strategic Commands Update on Defense Against Terrorism.

-- Statements on Political Subjects: The Slovenian PermRep briefed Allies on the recent EU Council meeting and reported on Minister of Foreign Affairs Rupel's visit to Macedonia.

END SUMMARY

Farewell to Ambassador Nuland

¶2. (U) In a moving and heartfelt address, Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer bid farewell to Ambassador Nuland, who he praised for her determination to move the Alliance out of what she had termed its previous &fossilized state.⁸ He lauded her commitment to multilateral relations and described the active role she played in explaining NATO's purpose and agenda to a global audience. He cited several of her most important accomplishments, including NATO's increased role in Afghanistan, its continued engagement in Kosovo, the growth in its &partners around the globe⁸, and its commitment to the eventual admission of Ukraine and Georgia. He also noted her significant interest in NATO-Russia issues and how she remained committed to positive relations even when disagreeing with Russia's positions. The SYG closed by noting the Ambassador refers to herself as a &security mom⁸ and she truly believes that NATO should look to protect our children against future security threats.

¶3. (U) Ambassador Nuland expressed her gratitude for the SYG's remarks and said that it had been an honor to serve with her NATO colleagues, who represent &the very best of transatlantic relations.⁸ She said that they had helped the United States to understand better Europe's interests and urged them to invest in common values and realize their global role in providing. She noted that NATO's challenge was to encourage more discussion and dialogue about common security threats &at the kitchen tables⁸ of Europe. She also urged her colleagues to continue to reform NATO's headquarters, financial, and staffing structures and expressed the need for greater funding and staffing for its strategic communication efforts.

AFGHANISTAN

¶4. (C) Counternarcotics: The SYG proposed that, following on SACEUR's discussion with Defense Ministers during the June 12-13 Defense Ministerial, the NAC agree at the table on a tasking to NATO Military Authorities to provide advice on SACEUR's proposal to amend the counternarcotics annex of the ISAF OPLAN to permit direct military action to interdict narcotics production and trafficking facilities. Canada and the U.S. supported an immediate tasking that would enable the NMAs to provide unfettered advice, without any political preconditions. Noting a lack of consensus on even the parameters of a tasking, France objected, and demanded that the SYG circulate his proposed tasking in writing, subject to a silence procedure, which French authorities could closely evaluate. Turkey strongly supported France, noting that any advice should only evaluate options within the bounds of the present OPLAN, not beyond it. The German Deputy was less outspoken, but noted he could not agree a tasking at the table, as Berlin would need to review it. The Netherlands was neutral, and stated that Allies should not conclude too hastily the impossibility of doing more under the OPLAN, but neither should they refuse to evaluate the possibility of doing more should the facts lead to that conclusion. The SYG said he would soon circulate a draft tasker with the aim of gaining consensus on a tasking that could be as open-ended as possible, given SACEUR's strong call to Ministers to amend the counternarcotics annex.

¶5. (C) Pakistan: The SYG commented that President Karzai's recent unhelpful comments threatening Pakistan illustrates the significant risk of a lack of close cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan on the border. He stated that he had conveyed the need for cooperation to Pakistani FM Qureshi during their bilateral meeting on the margins of the Paris Support Conference on June 12, as well as the importance of renewing the four-star-level Tripartite Commission talks between ISAF, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. The SYG said he had

invited either FM Qureshi or PM Gilani to address the NAC later this year, and that he hoped Deputy Assistant Secretary General Pardew's visit to Pakistan next week would help lay the groundwork for this. Qureshi emphasized the difficult situation for the Pakistani government, according to the SYG, along with a desire to work closely with NATO. Stating that Pakistan is &in denial⁸ over the problems in its border regions, the Italian PermRep urged the SYG to travel to Islamabad. Canada, supported by Spain and Turkey, urged that the NAC discuss and agree on themes for the SYG to raise with his interlocutors when and if he travels, to which de Hoop Scheffer agreed, noting such a discussion should occur on the heels of the Pardew visit.

¶6. (S) Kandahar Prison Break: The SYG pointed to the &disturbing news⁸ of the Sarpoza prison break in Kandahar, calling it a setback for the Afghan government and a propaganda victory for the Taliban. The IMS briefed that approximately 885 prisoners escaped during the complex attack on the prison, noting that in addition to a lack of resistance to the attack by the prison guards, the rapid dispersal of prisoners into many pre-positioned escape vehicles indicated a high-level of planning. The IMS had no information on any attacks by Opposing Militant Forces (OMF) on Kandahar City or surrounding areas, but noted that contrary to multiple reports in the media, it did not appear the OMF were &digging in⁸ around Kandahar. A joint Coalition/ANSF patrol had proceeded through the Arghandab area without incident, the IMS briefed. The IMS highlighted the capable response by the Afghan government, noting the Afghan CHOD Bismullah Khan was in Kandahar, and that ISAF and the ANA Air Corps had moved around 700 ANA soldiers from Kabul to Kandahar to lead security operations in the area. CMC Henault stated he had spoken with SACEUR, who is in Kabul on a previously scheduled trip, and COMISAF and MOD Wardak do not believe that Kandahar City is threatened.

¶7. (C) Operations Update: CMC Henault hailed a recent find by Afghan counternarcotics forces of over 250 metric tons of hashish in the Spin Boldak district of Kandahar province. He anticipated a significant financial setback for the OMF in its wake, judging that even by the most conservative estimates that OMF receive 10 percent of their funding from the drugs trade. The IMS briefed that RC-Capital operations are focused on the Musahi Valley south of Kabul. OMF, and correspondingly ISAF, are focused on the Kunduz-Baghlan corridor in RC-North. Farah remains the focus of OMF activity in RC-West. Intelligence has seen OMF command and control resources retreat from Garmsir (in southern Helmand) into Pakistan following operations by the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit. The IMS believes the OMF presence is increasing in Paktika and Paktia provinces in RC-East, and the OMF is seeking to expand its influence with locals.

¶8. (C) Other interventions: The UK PermRep noted that the UK intends to increase its force levels by 230 soldiers over the next year aimed at enhancing the ability of PRT Lashkar Gah to carry out quick impact reconstruction projects. UK force levels should reach approximately 8,000 by spring 2009. The Italian PermRep announced Italy is &transforming⁸ its caveats, reducing Ministerial approval times for out-of-area operations from 72 hours to six hours, and expressing a clear willingness to make Italian troops available anytime there is a need for &Allied solidarity.⁸ He stated Italy intends to increase the number of Carabinieri in-theater training ANP (primarily in RC-W, but perhaps now also in RC-S). The Slovak PermRep reviewed a governmental decision earlier in the week that if approval by the National Council in July, would result in up to 246 Slovak troops in Afghanistan by the end of 2009, with a significant portion of them providing force protection at bases in RC-South. .

BALKANS

¶9. (C) The SYG reported that the UNSC would review an updated report on UNMIK transition in Kosovo on June 20. The SYG also

reported there were 300 EULEX police and rule of law specialists now on the ground in Kosovo and EULEX is expected to reach full operating capacity in late October. The SYG said he hoped Allies would reach an agreement on Revision 3 of the KFOR OPLAN before the EULEX reaches full operational capacity in late October.

¶110. (C) CMC updated on the current situation on the ground now that the Kosovo constitution is in effect. KFOR,s focus remains on the Multinational Task Force (MNTF) North and MNTF Center areas of responsibility. The task forces in both of these areas have continuously been reinforced by units from other task forces. The German/Austrian operational reserve battalion (ORF) replaced the Italian ORF battalion on June 15 and will remain on standby until January 1, 2009.

¶111. (C) DCM Olson informed that Secretary Rice would meet UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon in New York June 19 to express U.S. support for the reconfigured UNMIK plan. Olson urged Allies to support the reconfiguration plan.

¶112. (C) Spain's PermRep said his government had received a message from Serbia,s MOD that Belgrade is ready to resume technical consultations with KFOR on KFOR activities in Mitrovica, despite some signaling to the contrary.

IRAQ

¶113. (C) The SYG was pleased to report that the PCG has completed the out-of-cycle review of NTM-I, which should be submitted for Council approval soon. He also noted that D/ASG for Regional, Economic and Security Affairs Aurelia Bouchez is attending the Friends of Iraq Conference in UAE on June 24 and 25.

Response to Terrorism

¶114. (C) The SYG began the meeting by indicating that SG0504 &Defense Against Terrorism8 (DAT) would be under silence until June 20th. CMC Henault summarized the report by stating that it discussed the counterterrorism strategies, the Bi-Strategic Command,s Strategic Military Concept to NATO,s Defense Against Terrorism, and Operation Active Endeavor.

Statements on Political Subjects

¶115. (U) The Slovenian PermRep briefed Allies on the recent EU Council meeting and reported on Minister of Foreign Affairs Rupel,s visit to Macedonia.

OLSON